



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

For Immediate Release
Monday, Nov. 3, 2003

Grassley Seeks More Details of Alleged Unnecessary Heart Surgeries at Tenet Hospitals

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, today asked Blue Cross of California to help with the committee's investigation of allegations of unnecessary heart operations and procedures performed at Tenet's Redding Medical Center, among other Tenet hospitals.

The text of Grassley's letter to Blue Cross of California follows.

November 3, 2003

VIA FACSIMILE: (805) 557-6028

ORIGINAL BY U.S. MAIL

Mr. David Helwig

President

Blue Cross of California

1 Wellpoint Way

Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

Dear Mr. Helwig:

The Senate Finance Committee (Committee) has jurisdiction over federal health programs in the United States Senate. The Committee is presently investigating Tenet Healthcare Corporation's (Tenet) corporate governance practices with respect to federal health care programs. As Chairman of the Committee, I request that Blue Cross of California cooperate with the Committee's investigation of allegations of unnecessary heart operations and procedures performed at Tenet's Redding Medical Center, among other Tenet hospitals.

On Saturday, November 1, 2003, *The Los Angeles Times* (*The Times*) reported that Blue Cross of California had data suggesting that doctors at Tenet's hospitals in Redding and Modesto performed unnecessary heart surgeries. Specifically, *The Times* quoted Dr. Woodrow Myers, chief medical officer for Blue Cross of California saying that, "a review by independent cardiologists of 52 bypass operations at those hospitals had concluded that 85% of the surgeries at Redding had been unnecessary and that 59% at Tenet's Doctors Medical Center in Modesto had been unwarranted."

As Chairman of the Finance Committee, I request that Blue Cross of California provide the Committee with the following information and documents:

1. The findings and results of the independent cardiologists retained by Blue Cross of California, as reported in *The Times*.

2. All documents provided to or made available to the independent cardiologists, which either directly or indirectly support or provide the basis for the findings and results reported in *The Times*.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. Please deliver this information to the Committee offices in 203 Hart Senate Office Building no later than the close of business on November 14, 2003.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Grassley
Chairman